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RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 0888
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA PRIORITY 3059
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 1481
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 2375
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KATHMANDU 000199

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SUBJECT: NEPAL: UN CONCERNED ABOUT DETERIORATING SITUATION
IN TERA

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Summary

1. (C) John Norris, Political Advisor to the Secretary General's Personal Representative Ian Martin, told the DCM on January 25 that the UN was concerned that the deteriorating security situation in the Terai could have an adverse effect on UN arms monitoring operations. Norris said that the Government of Nepal (GON) had not yet decided specifics about "protective details" for Maoist VIPs, and worried that this could cause more flare-ups like the recent one in Lahan. Norris stressed that the current unrest in the Terai was a crucial test for the GON. Norris informed the DCM that registration and separation from the weapons of Maoist combatants was going well.

UN Concerned About Unrest in Terai

2. (C) On January 25, John Norris, Political Advisor to the Secretary General's Personal Representative Ian Martin, told

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the DCM he was concerned that the worsening security situation in the Terai could have an adverse effect on UN operations. Norris said that the recent unrest in the Terai had begun when the Maoist protective detail of some Maoist political and military leaders opened fire on Madhesi protestors in Lahan (eastern Nepal). He worried that the November 28 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) had only vaguely addressed the issue of protective details. The CPA called for security arrangements for Maoist leaders to be decided through government consensus. Norris suggested that recent events in the Terai gave credence to the argument that the Maoists needed protection. He said that the GON needed to provide security to the Maoist leaders soon, so the UN could register the protective details and separate them from their weapons, before another explosive situation occurred.

Terai a Crucial Test for GON

13. (C) Norris stated that the current unrest in the Terai was a crucial test for the GON. Norris said it was clear that "rogue elements" were taking advantage of the situation for their own purposes: the Maoists, the Maoist splinter Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha (Terai People's Liberation Front), Hindu fundamentalists, and Royalists. He said, however, that the main Madhesi issue of proportional representation in voting constituencies was legitimate and an issue that the GON needed to address soon. Norris said that some constituencies in the hill districts only had 7,000 inhabitants, while some in the Terai had 700,000. Norris had heard rumors that the Prime Minister would address the nation on January 29, and hoped that the PM would offer to the Madhesis something on constituencies to help defuse the problem. Norris stressed that the role of the international community, specifically the U.S., India, and the UN, was critical to a positive outcome in the Terai. He said that the international community had to be ready to support a solution, should the GON come up with one.

Registration Going Well

14. (C) Norris said that the reason registration of Maoist combatants in Chitwan had come to a halt on January 25 was because the Maoist commanders had been confused about whether combatants would be registered as individuals or as units. Once the confusion was over, registration started again with no problems. Norris stated that registration was expected to be finished in Chitwan and Nawalparasi by January 27, and then the UN planned to begin registration the following week in the fifth, sixth, and seventh divisions simultaneously. Once these divisions were complete, the UN would begin with the divisions in the east (first and second); Norris acknowledged, however, that these latter divisions would

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likely be more difficult, given the recent events in the Terai and the remote locations of some of the cantonments.

Comment

15. (C) The continuing violence in the Terai has the potential to seriously damage the peace process in Nepal, unless the government takes serious action to solve it quickly. Norris is right that the U.S. needs to be ready to support the GON, which must come up with a palatable solution to Madhesi demands. That said, Norris's tendency to place the responsibility for most of the problems on the GON appears unfair. The Maoists spent much of their decade-long insurgency claiming to push for autonomy for Nepal's ethnic regions, but now have turned their backs on these issues as the prospect of power in Kathmandu nears. The precipitating factor of the latest round of unrest in the Terai was armed Maoists shooting a Madhesi protestor in Lahan, a serious breach of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. With a Constituent Assembly looming, other disadvantaged groups with long-held grievances may take to the streets as well. At the end of the day, if Nepal's peace process and democratic transition are to succeed, it will not be enough for the democratic parties to come to an acceptable accommodation with the Maoists and for the Maoists to renounce violence. The parties and the Maoists will also have to chart a course that gives a measure of hope to all Nepalis regardless of caste, ethnicity, and gender.

MORIARTY